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United States Department of Agriculture,

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY,

Seed and Plant Introduction and Distribution,

WASHINGTON, D. C.

FLORIDA BEGGAR WEED (*Meibomia tortuosa* Kuntze).

Florida beggar weed is an erect annual, a native of the West Indies, and extensively introduced in Florida. It is a leguminous plant, with rather woody stalks from 3 to 9 or 10 feet high, bearing an abundant leafage above, and when in flower tipped with much-branched erect panicles, the ascending lateral branches being often 8 to 12 inches long. The seeds are borne in many-jointed prickly pods, which break apart at maturity and are carried about by sticking to the bodies of animals or the clothing of persons. The plant is hairy throughout, and has trifoliolate leaves, the obliquely rhomboid leaflets being from 2 to 4 inches long. Florida beggar weed being a subtropical species is adapted for use only in the warmer parts of the Southern States. It is useful as a soil renovator and makes a fine quality of hay that is relished by all classes of farm stock.

Sowing.—For a crop of seed, beggar weed should be sown at the rate of 5 or 6 pounds of clean seed per acre. If grown for hay, from 8 to 10 pounds should be used. It should not be sown until the ground is warm and moist, and clean seed is preferable to the pods because of the more uniform germination and better stand which may be obtained. If sown at the beginning of the summer rains the seed need not be covered. It must not be covered too deeply, else the young plants will not be able to reach the surface. By sowing at the beginning of the summer two crops may be secured.

If cut for hay at the time the first flowers appear the roots will send up a second crop, which may be saved for seed, and enough seed will scatter to insure a crop next season. The seed may also be scattered in the corn rows at the time of the last cultivation or at the beginning of the rains in June. Then, after the corn has been stripped or cut for fodder, the beggar weed may be mown for hay or harvested for seed. The crop should be cut for hay when it is about 3 or 4 feet high, or at the beginning of the blooming period. If cut after full bloom, many of the lower leaves will have fallen and much of the best part of the crop will be lost.

